

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 01261 270938Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
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S E C R E T MUSCAT 1261

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MU, US
SUBJECT: MASIRAH

REF: MUSCAT 0784

1. NEAR CONCLUSION OF MEETING WITH FONMIN ZAWAWI AUG 23 (REPORTED MUSCAT 1257 AND 1260) I ALLUDED TO MASIRAH, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT WE OWE HIM RESPONSE TO HIS MAY PRESENTATIONS. TOLD HIM I KNEW FROM MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS THAT MATTER IS RECEIVING ATTENTION THOUGH I HAVE NO INSTRUCTIONS YET.

2. IN THIS CONTEXT I MADE REFERENCE TO SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST VIS-A-VIS INDIAN OCEAN AREA, SUCH AS OUR BILATERAL DISCUSSION

WITH SOVIETS TO DETERMINE POSSIBLE INTEREST IN LIMITATIONS ON GREAT POWER MILITARY PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, AND THE TRANSITION RECENTLY MADE IN US NAVY MIDEASTFOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH BAHRAIN. SAID THAT THESE CONCERNS OF OURS, TOGETHER WITH HEAVY FOCUS OF ATTENTION ON ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM AND QUESTION OF U.S. ARMS SALES POLICY, MAY HAVE DELAYED OUR GETTING DOWN TO MASIRAH DETAILS. ALSO, FRANKLY, I HAD SENSED SOME UNEASE IN WASHINGTON AT WHAT SEEMED TO BE A VERY HIGH PRICE TAG SUGGESTED BY OMANIS SIDE FOR MASIRAH LANDINGS. AT ANY RATE, I WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS SOON ON THIS QUESTION.

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3. ZAWAWI TOOK THIS WITHOUT COMMENT OR EMOTION OTHER THAN A SLIGHT NOD WHEN I MENTIONED THE OMANI ASKING PRICE.

4. COMMENT. THIS WAS MY FIRST MEETING WITH THE MINISTER SINCE MAY AND IN MY JUDGMENT HE WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED IT STRANGE IF MASIRAH HAD GONE UNMENTIONED. HIS EXTREMELY RELAXED

POSTURE ON THE SUBJECT COULD HAVE SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS. FIRST, HE IS FRESH FROM A MONTH'S VACATION AND HAS'T REALLY GOTTEN BACK INTO THINGS. SECOND, AS THIS IS RAMADAN NO ONE HERE IS UNDER THE SLIGHTEST PRESSURE TO SEE THAT THINGS GET DONE. THIRD, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, BASED ON EXPERIENCE WITH US, ZAWAWI MAY HAVE ADJUSTED HIS THINKING TO ALLOW FOR LONG DELAYS ON OUR PART REGARDING MASIRAH QUESTION. WHEREVER THE TRUTH LIES, I WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR TAKING UP THIS MATTER WITH HIM. END COMMENT.
WOLLE

SECRET

NNN

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